

Regular Session, 2014

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 146

BY REPRESENTATIVE LEGER

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

To direct the Department of Public Safety and Corrections to conduct a comprehensive statewide review of factors affecting the state's incarceration and recidivism rates, including parish-level data, and to provide a report of its findings prior to the convening of the 2015 Regular Session of the Legislature of Louisiana.

WHEREAS, according to a study by the Pew Center on the States and the Bureau of Justice Statistics published by the United States Department of Justice, Louisiana has the highest incarceration rate in the nation; and

WHEREAS, with this high incarceration rate comes a high monetary cost that is borne by the taxpayers in Louisiana; and

WHEREAS, the mission of the Department of Public Safety and Corrections is to enhance public safety through the safe and secure incarceration of offenders, effective probation and parole supervision, and proven rehabilitative strategies that successfully reintegrate offenders into society; and

WHEREAS, successful offender rehabilitation and reintegration into the community is essential to reducing recidivism rates which has a direct impact on public safety, crime prevention, and the cost of state and local criminal justice systems; and

WHEREAS, to this end, it is imperative that the financial resources of this state be used to support the implementation of the most successful and effective rehabilitative and reentry programs for offenders as proven by data collected specifically for this purpose; and

WHEREAS, a growing number of states have successfully implemented criminal justice reforms designed to improve public safety, hold offenders accountable, and protect taxpayer dollars.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that, to better understand the potential needs and opportunities for reform in Louisiana, the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby direct the Department of Public Safety and Corrections to conduct a comprehensive statewide review of factors affecting the state's incarceration and recidivism rates, including parish-level data.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that in conducting this review, the department shall do all of the following:

(1) Evaluate the availability and efficacy of alternatives to incarceration across various parishes and the utilization rates of such alternatives among various parishes.

(2) Identify the extent to which actuarial, validated risk and needs assessments are being used to inform sentencing, revocation, and release decisions and the extent to which best practices such as swift, certain, and graduated sanctions and incentives are being used to promote compliance with supervision and intervention services.

(3) Examine the cost of services currently being utilized and the sources of revenues for those services, including but not limited to state funds.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that, based upon this review, the department shall prepare a report that includes the following information:

(1) Evaluation of each parish's performance in supporting the department's strategic goals of preventing and diverting more individuals from entering the criminal justice system, providing appropriate and less restrictive community-based sanctions and services, reserving serious sanctions for individuals who pose the greatest risk to public safety, and focusing on data-driven responses and evidence-based practices.

(2) Identification of additional community resources and policy changes at the state and local levels that would be needed to reduce incarceration and recidivism while enhancing public safety, including options for modifying the state's funding streams for parish jails to better align fiscal incentives with these strategic goals.

(3) Recommendations and strategies that can be implemented by the department in partnership with local jurisdictions, including public, private, and nonprofit entities, to address any identified deficiencies and to assist in developing a statewide, coordinated response across all of Louisiana's communities to support the department's strategic goals.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the department is encouraged to seek outside consultation to explore operating models and community corrections practices, including

those from other states, that are successfully applying the principles of justice reinvestment to accomplish the creation of effective community-based correctional interventions in local jurisdictions.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the department may seek input from or utilize any reports prepared by the Louisiana District Attorney Association, the Louisiana Sheriffs' Association, the Louisiana Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers, the Louisiana Public Defender Board, the Louisiana Sentencing Commission, or any other entity or organization deemed appropriate by the department.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the department may seek assistance from staff of the Louisiana Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Criminal Justice in conducting this review.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this report shall be submitted to the governor, the president of the Senate, and the speaker of the House of Representatives prior to the convening of the 2015 Regular Session of the Legislature of Louisiana.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a suitable copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the secretary of the Department of Public Safety and Corrections.

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SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE